Containing Neelgai menace

†1310. DR. PRABHATHAKUR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the farmers in various States of the country are suffering heavy losses of crops because of the 'Roch' animal or 'Neelgai';

(b) whether the number of this species which is called as 'Neelgai' and which is farmer's nightmare and of no use to them, has been increasing simply because the villagers and farmers mistook it for a cow which is considered a sacred animals;

(c) whether 'Neelgai' is considered an animal belonging to the species of dear which is totally different from the species of cow; and

(d) whether on this basis, Government propose to bring any bill or resolution forbidding the use of term 'Neelgai' for 'Roch' animal and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir. There are reports of damage to crops by Neelgai.

(b)The increase in population of Neelgai may be attributed mainly to conducive habitat and no simply because of religious beliefs.

(c) Yes, Neelgai belongs to the deer family.

(d) No, Sir. No such change in the nomenclature has been considered necessary.

Melting of Himalayan glaciers

1311. SHRI S.P.M. SYED KHAN:
PROF. SAIF-UD-DIN SOZ:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that scientists have warned that glaciers that feed the river Ganges are likely to melt down before the end of this century due to man made carbon dioxide emissions;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the claim of scientists is true that there would be acute water shortage as these glaciers are vital for water supplies to millions of people in the Himalayan region;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) Government's efforts to save the glaciers from climate warming; and

(f) whether any report has been prepared by his Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Studies carried out by the Geological Survey of India have revealed that the Himalayan glaciers are passing through a phase of recession, which is a worldwide phenomena. The recession of glaciers is a part of the natural cyclic process of changes in size and other attributes of the glaciers. These changes could be attributed to various reasons including global warming. Bhagirathi and Alaknanda rivers confluence to form Ganges at Deoprayag. As per glacier inventory details of Geological Survey of India Bhagirathi basin has 238 glaciers while Alaknanda basin has 407 glaciers. Glaciers that feed Ganges are likely to sustain for centuries.

(c) and (d) Due to melting of ice, consequent upon faster recession, runoff of rivers may increase, initially. This scenario, however, may ultimately lead to overall reduction of water availability in futures, as the size and number of glaciers may reduce.

(e) The recession of glaciers is a natural cyclic process characteristic of the interglacial period. It is practically not possible to save the glaciers through artificial measures.

(f) In order to develop proper understanding of glaciers, the Government has commissioned a few studies including a comprehensive programme on the inventory of glaciers, fluctuations in their sizes and mass balance.

Loss of dense forest cover

1312. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country had lost about 26,000 Sq. Km. of dense forest cover in 2003;